

Hanse Towns. I was, however, in the first place, merely charged to make overtures to the Senates of each of these towns, and to point out the advantages they would derive from the protection of Napoleon in exchange for the small sacrifice of 6,000,000 francs in his favor. I had on this subject numerous conferences with the magistrates : they thought the sum too great, representing to me that the city was not so rich as formerly, because their commerce had been much curtailed by the war; in short, the Senate declared that, with the utmost good will, their circumstances would not permit them to accept the "generous proposal" of the Emperor.

I was myself, indeed, at a loss to conceive how the absurdity of employing me to make such a proposition was overlooked, for I had really no advantage to offer in return to the Hanse Towns. Against whom did Bonaparte propose to protect them ? The truth is, Napoleon then wished to seize these towns by direct aggression, which, however, he was not able to accomplish until four years afterwards.

During five years I witnessed the commercial importance of these cities, and especially at Hamburg. Its geographical situation, on a great river navigable by large vessels to the city, thirty leagues from the mouth of the Elbe; the complete independence it enjoyed; its municipal regulations and paternal government, were a few amongst the many causes which had raised Hamburg to its enviable height of prosperity.¹ What, in fact, was the population of these remnants of the grand Hanseatic League of the Middle Ages ? The population of Hamburg when I was there amounted to 90,000, and that of its small surrounding territory to 25,000. Bremen had 36,000 inhabitants, and 9000 in its territory; the city of Lubeck, which is smaller and its territory a little more extensive than that of Bremen, contained a population of 24,000 souls within and 16,000 without the walls. Thus the total

¹ Amongst the wreck of so many States these three towns, the survivors of the great League, once consisting of eighty towns, still figure among the States of the German Empire with populations (in 1880) as follows: —Hamburg, 453,869; Bremen, 155,723; Lubeck, 63,571; total, 674,163 (*Almanack de Golha*. 1884, p. 395). At the present day, however, Antwerp bids fair to become the Hamburg of the Continent.